

Todmorden Town Deal Board

23rd July 2020

Meeting notes

In attendance:

Members

- Cllr Dacre (Co-Chair)
- Tim Benjamin (Co-Chair)
- Cllr Press
- Town Cllr Skelton
- Mr Leigh MBE (Representative for Craig Whittaker MP office)
- Tony Lawson
- Pam Warhurst
- Stephen Curry
- Frankie Mullen
- James Duffy
- Andrew Kim
- Barbara Jones

CMBC Officers

- Karen Houghton, Programme Manager
- Sarah Richardson, Assistant Director of Customer Services
- Mary Farrar, Corporate Lead -Transportation
- Daisy Wilde, Neighbourhood Coordinator

In Attendance

- Cllr Scullion, CMBC Member (Deputy Leader and, Cabinet member and Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Strategy)

Apologies:

- Richard Armitage, CMBC Housing and Enabling Projects Manager
- Neil Fearnley, CMBC Flood Programme Manager
- Rebecca Greenwood and Judith Furlonger, WYCA (West Yorkshire Combined Authority)
- Craig Whittaker MP

Welcome/GDPR

Zoom conference call Chaired by Councillor Dacre (Co-Chair).

Cllr Dacre welcomed the Board and introduced herself.

GDPR overview.

Cllr Dacre asked that people respond in writing that their personal details can be disclosed between Board Members and for a press release. This is critical for the purposes of GDPR.

Action: Board Members to confirm via email that they are happy for their details to be disclosed.

Introductions

Cllr Dacre asked the Board Members to introduce themselves and state who they represent.

Cllr Dacre – CMBC (Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council) Elected Member - Co-Chair for Todmorden Town Deal Board and Ward Councillor for Todmorden Ward

Cllr Press – CMBC Elected Member - Cabinet Member for Public Services and Communities, and Ward Councillor for Todmorden Ward

Cllr Scullion – CMBC Elected Member - Deputy Leader, Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Strategy, and Ward Councillor for Luddendenfoot Ward

Cllr Denis Skelton – Todmorden Town Council Representative

Tim Benjamin – Private Sector Representative and Co-Chair for Todmorden Town Deal Board

Tony Lawson – Private Sector Representative

Pam Warhurst – Private Sector Representative

Stephen Curry – Private Sector Representative

Frankie Mullen – Community and Voluntary Sector Representative

James Duffy – Community and Voluntary Sector Representative

Andrew Kim – Community and Voluntary Sector Representative

Barbara Jones – Community and Voluntary Sector Representative

Mr Leigh MBE – Representative for Craig Whittaker MP Office

Sarah Richardson – Assistant Director for Customer Services and Senior Responsible Officer for the Board

Karen Houghton – Programme Manager, Regeneration and Resilience

Mary Farrar – Corporate Transportation Lead

Daisy Wilde – Upper Valley Neighbourhood Coordinator, Todmorden and Ryburn Wards

Nolan Principles and Register of Interests

Cllr Dacre and Karen discussed Nolan Principles and Register of Interests.

Nolan Principles:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

Procedure

Cllr Dacre asked that Board Members enter questions in the chat and they will be answered at the end.

Pertaining to 'live streaming'; the accelerator workshop *might* be, but the next full TTDB (Todmorden Town Deal Board) *will* be made public. The Board will be open to the public but is not a public meeting. Members of the public are only entitled to talk if they are invited to by the Co-Chairs.

Overview of the Towns Fund

Last year, £3.6 billion fund was announced for towns, with Todmorden and Brighouse given the opportunity to bid for up to £25 million each. The Towns Fund is from MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government).

Reference was made to the overarching Town Deal Funding objectives.

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use: ensuring towns are thriving places for people to live and work;
- Skills and Culture, enterprise infrastructure: driving private sector investment, ensuring towns have the space to support skills and small business development;
- Connectivity: developing local transport schemes complementing regional and national networks, supporting the delivery of improved digital connectivity

An initial application for £500k accelerator funding needs to be submitted by August and the full Town Investment Plan to be drafted and submitted to MHCLG by the end of October.

The Towns Fund is a capital programme. It is not competitive, however, there needs to be a strong case. It is exciting that it will open up opportunities for the Town.

Steps:

- Submit an early readiness questions – done
- Set up a Town Board – done
- Agree some early capital investment projects by August 14th
- Develop a robust TIP (Town Investment Plan) by October

Accelerator Fund - £500k for Todmorden to be spent by March 31st 2021 and decided by August 14th aforementioned.

- Improvement to parks
- Improvement to town centres
- Demolition or site remediation with immediate benefit

Karen discussed what needs to be included in the TIP – context analysis, needs and challenges, assets and opportunities, strategy, and engagement and delivery.

TIP process also discussed (see Karen’s presentation for flowchart).

Strategic Headings – Scope of the TIP

Cllr Dacre referred to a document submitted to Government last November, which included a long list of what Calderdale would like to spend the money on.

- Todmorden Town Hall
- Rose Street
- Todmorden Learning Places
- Corridor improvement and train travel resilience
- Park improvements
- Employment spaces, inclusive economy, business development
- Housing and retail premises improvement
- Climate change and biodiversity programme
- Cultural offer enhancement

Cllr Dacre commented that there is enormous scope for projects, but in other cases there are plans afoot for these areas. We recognise that there may need to be tweaks to the proposed list, particularly as a reassessment after Covid-19.

There are also opportunities to unlock funding from elsewhere for other projects that may be possible.

The main task of the Board over the coming months needs to be putting the Bid together and presenting the best possible Bid to satisfy the criteria.

Workshop

- a. Initial “accelerator” project description
- b. Ideation exercise

Tim Benjamin led a workshop for the Board Members. This workshop considered problems and opportunities. Who is Tod? Who are the people of Todmorden? The importance of considering the wider community and future generations of the Town were discussed.

Discussions focused on Board Member’s thoughts on what the purpose of the Bid should be; positive changes it could bring about and how the changes may shape the future.

The Board also focused on who the Bid should be aimed at, and it was broadly agreed that people who live, work and visit the Town would need to be considered. It was evident from conversations that this was a broad group of diverse people.

Further discussions incorporated what these people may want and hope for, and what they may need. The barriers to these were discussed.

"There's MORE in TodMORden" (local campaign) and ‘By Industry We Prosper’ (coat of arms) were discussed.

Actions and Next Steps

Tim discussed actions and next steps.

Accelerator Subgroup:

Board Member volunteers for the accelerator subgroup needed – workshop next week, 30th July 5-7pm.

14th August is the deadline for accelerator funding. The subgroup would make a decision and circulate to all Board Members for information.

Action: Board Members to let Karen know if they would like to be part of the Accelerator Subgroup.

Evidence Gathering Subgroup:

Board Member volunteers to work on evidence-gathering needed. This is public consultation - rather than asking people, ‘what would you like us to do?’, we want further evidence of problems that people may have, and then we can discuss what interventions may be possible to solve these problems.

Karen mentioned that there is a small amount of development funding, so consideration could be given to whether we want to pay someone to do the consultation.

Action: Board Members to let Karen know if they would like to be part of the Evidence Gathering Subgroup.

It is imperative that Board Members let Karen know as soon as possible if they would like to be involved in the two aforementioned subgroups as the Co-Chairs will be fixing dates over the weekend.

Date of next Board meeting: 27th August, agenda to include:

- i. Report from evidence subgroup

ii. Report from external research agency

Questions

Cllr Dacre took questions from the Board Members.

Question: Can you remind me where the £500k came from?

Answer: This is additional accelerator funding from the Government.

Question: Why did we go for October for the TIP submission when there was an option for January? (According to the guidance).

Question: Is there a disadvantage to being in the Jan cohort for TIP submission?

Answer: It was felt that we could achieve submission by end of October, meaning we can maintain some pace, but would also allow an opportunity to resubmit in January if necessary.

Question: We already have an action plan for TTH (Todmorden Town Hall) and Rose Street, will these be prioritised?

Question: Are you including capital for Market Hall within the Rose Street heading?

Answer: The Market Hall is included in the Rose Street project.

Comment: Todmorden Civic Pride presented a comprehensive collection of previously consulted plans going back to 2003. This needs to be considered as well as the Council list.

Response: The collection of previously consulted plans' need to be made available to all of the Board Members. Some of these documents are available on UVCR website - <http://ucvr.org.uk/>

Comments: Lots of consultation has already taken place. We already know what people want and there are plans in place as mentioned. Concerns were raised that the Board would be 'reinventing the wheel'

Question: Is it possible to put ideas out there, for people to make comments on existing plans?

Answer: It will not be enough to reheat projects; we need to be smarter and up to date, and evidence gathering is key to this.

Question: Can we draw on work that has been done? Collate it and update it?

Answer: That will have its place. We recognise the limited timeframe for this.

Comment: Mr Leigh MBE shared Craig Whittaker MP's views: time is of the essence; we need to plan quickly and make moves to progress.

Question: Is there information and documentation about the state of play/work done so far on each of CMBC's candidate projects?

Answer: Yes, can I suggest you ask Karen to help you look at it outside the meeting. Karen can guide you through the Council documents and where to look on the Council website.

Action: Karen to send out further information to the Board Members outside of the meeting.

Questions: How will we make decisions in this group? Is it a democratic vote? Who decides what we vote on? Who sets the agenda? Please make this process more transparent.

Answer: We are supposed to work by consensus and vote only if absolutely necessary. Co-Chairs set the Agenda with assistance from the officers.

Comment: I think all members should be able to contribute to the Agenda if there are issues which concern them.

Response: Members can submit items for the Agenda, but Chairs will finalise it.

Question: The boundaries were set differently to the suggested portion in the original prospectus. Is there scope for reviewing the boundary of the project to include works we may now have identified, or will we identify these in the group work?

Response: Do you mean the physical boundary?

Answer: Yes.

Response: We can speak with colleagues at MHCLG about whether we are able amend the boundary again.

Question: Todmorden Town Hall Working Group already has phased plan of action; to whom do they send that or will officers deal with that?

Answer: Best to pass on to Karen.

Response: Sarah agreed she would progress with CAFM (Corporate Assets and Facilities Management).

Question: A special subgroup for Cornholme would be good; it is a serious challenge - any chance of that?

Answer: Not sure whether that will be possible, but we will definitely need to consider it in our suggestions, and it must be at the forefront of our minds

Question: Can we have task groups, or do they have to be subgroups of the Board?

Answer: We will need to have subgroups of the Board, but we can Board Members and people who are not Board Members. They could be subgroups as small as 3 people or a subgroup could include all members of the Board. We can invite people to speak at Board meetings and as part of the subgroups.

Question: Have we applied for and received the £140K to help develop this proposal? Is it all still available?

Answer: Yes, the development funding is available.

Questions: Can we have public consultation on the proposal before it is submitted in October? With time to make changes?

Answer: I am not sure we will have time to consult on the final place, but we will be consulting throughout the process, so there should not be a need for this.

Questions: How do we contact each other? Can Board Members details be shared?

Answer: It is important for the purposes of GDPR, as previously discussed, that we have in writing your consent to share personal information.

Comment: We need to be careful not to work in a silo. It is important we connect with other Town Boards across the Borough, particularly Brighouse Town Deal Board. This could help with reaching other areas of funding.

Answer: I expect that will be considered.

Question: Is there a split on revenue and capital?

Answer: Using capital spending to create projects that are sustainable is key, as there is no revenue support. We need projects that are self-sustaining. For example, some of the existing projects will have to be looked at again post Covid-19 as there are pressures on these projects to sustain themselves.

Karen commented that revenue is a tiny element on the plan. It is clearly a capital programme.

Question: What is the level of detail for August decision – the Accelerator Fund?

Answer: A letter – but it needs to be approved by our section 151 officer for auditing purposes. It does not have to link into a long-term plan; it could be a standalone project.

Comment: I feel this has been a useful meeting and that members of the board should have a high degree of enthusiasm and optimism. This is a fabulous for Todmorden; we should not underestimate the task ahead and embrace the opportunity.

Comment: Mary Farrar shared some information relating to the Corridor Improvement Programme (CIP). There is a huge amount of data that can be made available. CIP did not obtain the funding needed to meet all the things people wanted implementing.

There are many schemes which have been highly developed, widely consulted on and that are very recent. The master planning with architectures for these projects has been useful – we have gathered layers of information on heritage assets and connectivity issues – cohesive approach. Karen and I are talking through this and you can access the information via Karen.

Date of next meeting

TBC